CHINA

Darkness at Noon 02 - WAYTITAN

China, the Chinese Communist Party, the history of the internet since 1984, and it's connection to Xinjiang.

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THE COMPANY

I started this company because I was angry at the amount of scams and fraud in the world. I did not know that this massive rise in corruption, complacency, and the failure of sovereign governments was linked to something worse. Companies seemed extraordinarily complacent about their cybersecurity, so I suspected that perhaps all this fraud had something to do with that? Did these companies benefit from data being less difficult to steal, and individuals easier to deceive?

As we audited the broader internet and found manipulated registrar after registrar, linked to one another in a great silk road across hidden DNS Reverse Records, we realized only a nation-state, and certainly not the US (they would have done a better job of hiding it), was behind this "internet within an internet". It was a massive hacking attempt that's end to end, global nature was rivaled only by the somewhat incompetence of those who set it up. It frustrated me that the truth seemed to be something laughable and so ridiculous it made research impossible. Why would a nation state do this, so poorly, and also without anyone saying anything? Who would believe what the data was pointing to? Who was capable of even understanding such technical information?

We grinded through over 27,000 open Elasticsearch clusters distributed across almost every datacenter in the world for over 18 months. A nearly equal amount of information was also churned through across CouchDB, Cassandra, Mongo, and Redis databases.

I can remember so many sites in front of the bright glow of the monitor typing into the dark terminal with my hands dried out from the heat of the keyboard. Always running into some frustrating syntax code error like speedbumbs stacked every other meter an F1 raceway.

A BROAD SKETCH

My only regret will always be that I didn't spend even more time in front of computers and monitors.

Let me broadly sketch out what is going on here as best I understand. Enormous work has been done by so many people over the last decade. My biggest fear here is that I am right and I will inadvertently take credit from good people who put in years of thankless work.

NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR

In 1984 the PLA is heavily downsized, many of its functions transitioned to the newly created "Ministry of State Security", and tens of thousands of researchers and soldiers are laid off. One of those soldiers was the brilliant radio and telecommunications engineer, Ren Zhuangwei. He heads for Shenzhen with many others he served with to seek his fortune in a city rapidly being cracked open for capitalism and investment. Deng Xiaoping, who leads China and is now implementing these rapid reforms, will become Time's "Person of the Year" in 1985.

INTERNET INNOVATIONS

The year before, on January 1st, 1983, the official switch over was made from NCP to TCP/IP. This day is one of only a few that can be possibly considered the birth of the true "internet". In November the RFC that standardizes DNS, #882, will be passed by the IETF.

In 1984 BIND Douglas Terry, Mark Painter, David Riggle and Songnian Zhou will invent the BIND, the world's first and still de facto DNS server software. Zhou will go on to found "Platform Computing" in Canada before selling to IBM in 2012. Dr. Paul Vixie, who we will see again later, will go on to lead development of BIND while at DEC.

We should briefly mention what DNS is. We are going to make some broad metaphors here that are incorrect to those who have read the specific exact RFCs, but bear with us. DNS, or the hierarchical set of interlocking and referencing "network identity servers" is what makes the very concept of "website names" possible. Everything you type into your browser is translated from an L7 domain name to an L3 IP address then to an L2 MAC address. It bounces up and down from L2 to L3 before (and I'm simplifying things here) before arriving at one of 13 global "root" data centers. These 13 servers provide the ultimate reference point for either the "true" location of websites, an IPv4 address, or a pointer to another name server below itself in the hierarchy that knows.

THE CHINA NET

China's first foray into cyberspace was an email sent on 20 September 1987 to Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. It said "Across the Great Wall, we can reach every corner in the world", or 越過長城. This has since become a well-known phrase in China, and is displayed on the desktop login screen for QQ mail.

QQ.com, now something like the 6th most popular website in the world, is based on that most missed of technologies, AOL Instant Messenger. Originally called ICQ and developed by a small Israeli company, the Chinese would name their version OICQ, before being sued and forcing them to switch to the less obviously similar "QQ" Regardless, ICQ would quickly pivot to the "AIM" name. While the matter was settled, the lesson of litigation as a means to assert transnational power would not be lost on China's government.

In 1989 the Chaos Computer Club out of Karlsruhe, Germany would be implicated in the hacking of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. East German's in their early 20's had launched a scheme to find documents relating to SDI and sell them to KGB fences. The book "The Cuckoo's Egg" by Clifford Stoll would later famously document this incident. It was never determined the exact extent of the network of German hackers beyond Karl Koch. Koch would accidentally self-immolate himself in a small German forest near Celle, Germany months after, and all else remains speculation.

The Tianemman Square massacre occurs 2 months following the death of Koch in Germany. The PLA units brought into the city will open fire on their fellow citizens across Beijing. The death count is released at around 300. Notes from the British ambassador at the time, Sir Alan Donald, suggest over 10,000 were killed.

In 1993 Marc Andressen begins working on the Mosaic browser while at the University of Illinois's National Center for Supercomputing Applications. This browser eventually will be developed into a commercial offering and one of the most enduring symbols of the Dot Com Boom, Netscape Navigator. When it was sold off (to AOL) at the end of the "Browser Wars" to avoid succumbing to their arch-rival to Microsoft, the code would be open sourced into what we know today as the "Mozilla Foundation" (Mosaic-Killer or Mozilla) and the Firefox Browser.

On April 20, 1994, CSTNET launched the first national formal Internet link and this became the earliest direct global connected Internet in the country. CSTNET still exists to this day, with its principal node at Tsinghua University, built by the Americans in the early 1900's, and is connected to the Energy Department's ESNET.

THE SINISTER SIX

In 1995, TOP-SEC, and then in 1996 Venus Tech, security firms acting as fronts for the Ministry of State Security, were established. Later four other firms would join them:

- SANGFOR
- NSFocus
- Hillstone Networks
- H3C (formed by a merger of Huawei and Level 3 networks)
- -
- Venus Tech
- TOP-SEC

These companies, essentially investments made at the very dawn of the Dot Com boom, were financial kerosene for the CCP. Unfortunately most R&D these companies would "produce" was stolen Western research, meaning their cost of goods sold was unprecedented in just how minimal it was. These investments return several orders of magnitude their original investment to the People's Bank of China, and significantly empower a small ruling oligarchy at the top of the CCP hierarchy that had always leaned dangerously towards a totalitarian, Maoist ethic.

All of this happened against the backdrop of finance barriers crumbling across the world that allowed instant deployments of wealth and money. Money now moved like emails and missiles, at the speed of light across fiber networks that wrapped globe many times. While the Chinese government did not yet have bombers that could strike around the world or rockets that could reach any target, it began to wonder if perhaps the motivation of money and the influence of information were in a way, even more significant. While the US was hard at work on THAAD, the CCP, copying Japanese success in the 1980's, turned towards a different strategy.

SOUTH EAST ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS

In 1997, the SouthEast Asian Financial Crisis begins in Thailand. This crisis, a slow ominous unraveling of financial markets that had in someways begun since the collapse of the CORDIALE in the early 1970s, would spread across the emerging markets there country by country. Indonesia, which looked far from trouble in 1997, would experience such convulsions that the US Navy sent nearly 20 ships and over 10,000 soldiers to provide evacuation and support for Americans in Jakarta. Suharto would be toppled from power, and Korea and Japan came with days of failing had it not been for aggressive IMF market freezes.

This crisis, which can be traced all the way back to 1994 and the unravelling of Mexico's economy, would next spread around the world. Russia was forced to devalue its currency, days after saying it wouldn't, in 1998. Brazil and Argentina would experience major debt crises as well.

These financial disasters would lead to one of the most ironic and significant TIME magazine covers to date:

TIME
The Clintons: Their Future
Who Wrote Shakespeare?
THE COMMITTEE TO SAVE THE WORLD
The inside story of how the Three Marketeers have prevented a global economic meltdown—so far

China, with vast currency reserves and a stronger control over information than its neighbors, would stand alone in survival.

From here the story becomes more familiar to any reader now. The years go by, the DotCom bubble bursts, September 11th occurs, and the Iraq War quickly follows. Events quickly follow that no one really recalls today, the Hainan Spy Plane Incident, Titan Rain, PLA Hospital 301, lost like, as Roy Batty says, "tears in the rain".

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW

While the first pieces were put in place around 1984, it was not until 2008, but certainly by 2012-2013, that the Chinese Government set in motion the final plan to replace the international political structure in place since the last few months of World War II. This structure, weakened by decades of transnational capital flows, organized crime, Chinese influence, and by a US-USSR axis that struggled to even police its own borders, never really stood a chance.

The US has for four decades been content with an even anticipated the Chinese rise to prominence. What it could never imagine was that such a rise would mean vast global changes and the introduction of what increasingly looks like a system of perfect planetary surveillance. As the lights go out across Central Asia, more and more light it being shed on this unthinkably harsh, technology supported totalitarianism

This system, based on breakthroughs in networking and processing technology that allow massive video and audio surveillance across most of the Earth's surface, cameras in the thousands of megapixels that could record every detail of reality for analysis, and machine learning programs to analyze the data and make inferences of astounding brilliance, would ensure if not perfect stability then certainly perfect power for whoever ruled.

Of course such a system, deployed from China and managed by legions of scholars in Beijing, would almost certainly lead to all nations engaging in a tributary like system with China, if not most of the Chinese people as well. Individuals around the world would serve in something like a subhuman slave status, similar to how the Nazi's imagined other races. While this would provide enormous wealth and privileges to a tiny sliver of a worldwide elite, the 00.01%, one would imagine it would only be, if followed to its logical conclusion over years and decades, only slightly less worse than death for the rest. Dissent would be impossible, choice irrelevant, and mass suffering for all unavoidable.

XINJIANG

> After Auschwitz there can be no poetry

In Xinjiang the Chinese perfected the system that they would intend to roll out globally. That system today is almost fully in place. Most of the residents there now have either been liquidated or are in slave camps. From satellite photos we know all homes immediately outside of the 5 or so major cities in Northwest China have been bulldozed. The rubble of their former homes is the only thing that can probably ever serve as a kind of proper grave, or at least memorial, the largest mass killing in human history. That it happened in peacetime only ads to gravity of this second holocaust.

Those that haven't been starved inside their homes or forcibly resettled back East somewhere in China proper are deep underground. They exist somewhere between hundreds and thousands of feet underneath the crust and exist in the military bunkers and coal mines that weave their way through the Tarim Craton of Central Asia. They operate as labor slaves, sexual slaves, or have been recruited as unwilling participants into terrifying medical experiments.

The 21st century owes them a debt that can never be forgiven.

Tears in the Rain - Blade Runner (9/10) Movie CLIP (1982) HD

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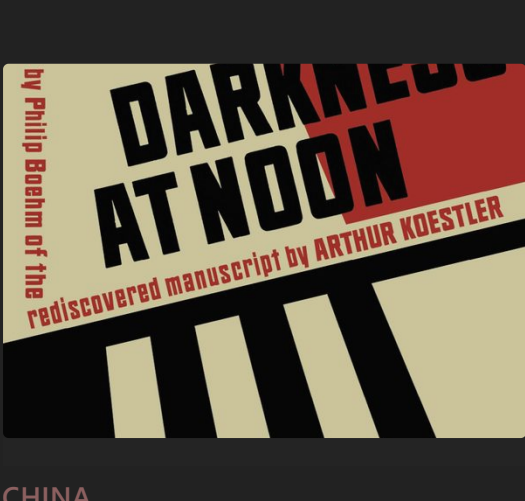

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